

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-5 (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) ~~An Apparatus~~ apparatus for monitoring performance of an optical communication link at an intermediate location along said link, said apparatus comprising:

a coupler that taps a portion of an optical data signal traveling along said link;

an optical amplifier that boosts said portion of said optical data signal;

an optical receiver that recovers data based on said portion of said optical data signal;

a tunable filter that isolates a particular wavelength component of said portion of said optical data signal for input to said optical receiver;

an error correction decoding circuit that identifies a number of detected errors in receipt of said data; and

a link verification stage that generates an indication of link operation based on errors identified by said error correction decoding circuit, wherein said link verification stage tunes said tunable filter to test a selected wavelength component.

7-10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said optical receiver comprises:

a photodetector circuit that generates an electrical signal based on said portion of said optical data signal; and

a demodulator that recovers data from said electrical signal.

12-16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) ~~An Apparatus~~ apparatus for monitoring performance of an optical communication link at an intermediate location along said link, said apparatus comprising:
- means for tapping a portion of an optical data signal traveling along said link;
 - means for amplifying said portion of said optical data signal;
 - means for recovering data based on said portion of said optical data signal;
 - means for isolating a particular wavelength component of said portion of said optical data signal for input to said recovering means, wherein said means for isolating comprises a tunable filter;
 - means for identifying errors in receipt of said data; and
 - means for generating an indication of link operation based on a number of errors detected by said error identifying means, wherein said means for generating tunes said tunable filter to test a selected wavelength component.

18-20 (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said recovering means comprises:
- a photodetector circuit that generates an electrical signal based on said portion of said optical data signal; and
 - a demodulator that recovers data from said electrical signal.

22-25 (Canceled)